

\*----- CPU NEWSWIRE ONLINE MAGAZINE -----\*  
"The Original 16/32bit Online Magazine"

from  
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"

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featuring  
STReport ~ Online

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> 01/12/90: CPU Newswireâ € #403 The Original 16/32 bit Online Magazine!

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> The Editor's Podium ¢

It is difficult, at best, to present a 'smiling face' week after week when one realizes all is not well in our computing community. Considering all the positive promises presented to the developers at the Atari Comdex reception and of course, the promises made during a number of online conferences, none of which have amounted to anything remarkable, one is left with a one word question in mind.... WHEN? And where is the advertising, the merchandising and most of all, the product?

Although not generally known throughout the Atari computing community, there are those at Atari (at the top) who feel that Stacy should be retired. You are not hearing things. Retired is the nice way of saying there are serious regrets for having gone forward with this project and if it could be reversed such would be the case. The bottom line in the "Stacy Affair" will no doubt, surface in a short while. Could this be because of type acceptance problems? The Stacy is not a "dumb terminal". Or is it?

After having had the enjoyable pleasure of meeting Andy Marken personally at Comdex, I find it absolutely amazing to learn that he and his firm, Marken Communications, are history with Atari as of the Feb 1! The man was "everpresent" at the Atari Comdex display, he was, without a doubt, the unofficial ambassador for Atari. He made every visitor feel important and welcome. At CES, he was responsible for more sale than any one else at the hospitality suite. Oh well, so much for hoping to see an end to the old, bizarre Atari business practices. This matter is covered elsewhere in this issue.

Are these indications of Atari attempting to withdraw from a prominent position in the computing public's eyes? Perhaps, the continued lack of producing timely results and keeping promises is finally catching up to those at Atari who feel the userbase is, indeed, a mushroom patch in need of fertilizer? Time will tell. In the meantime, keep your eyes on the ole faithful revolving door, word is, its going to 'heat up' pretty good over the next 90 days...

One fact that must be said time and time again, the computers Atari offers are absolutely among the finest to be had. (IMHO) If only I could say the same about the company and its strange ways of doing business.

Thanks for your support,

Ralph....

NOTICE: Poolfix2.prg is NOT to be used, please wait for version 3.

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> CPU REPORTâ €

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Issue # 50

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by Michael Arthur

Remember When....

In 1644, a 16-year old Frenchman named Blaise Pascal designed one of the first mechanical calculators, the Pascaline, which was capable of accurately adding numbers up to 9 digits large, in order to help his father figure out Tax Levies, and when Alan Turing, a British cryptographer/mathematician, invented the Turing Machine (a device capable of emulating any mechanical process) in order to solve a mathematical puzzle, or when the Turing Machine later became the foundation for ideas behind computer technology?

CPU INSIGHTSâ €

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Implications of Superconductivity

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Electricity is a vital part of our lives. It powers our cities,

runs our industries, and our needs for transportation could not be met without it. Indeed, without electricity, civilization as we know it would come to a grinding halt. But even as electricity plays a needed role in today's world, we must recognize that since mankind cannot, at the present time, produce an infinite amount of electricity, ways must be found to make technology utilize it efficiently. Recently, a phenomenon called superconductivity has received great notice as a way of actually doing this. But in order to understand how superconductivity will affect our lives, we must first understand how it functions.

Conductivity is defined as the ability to transmit electrical current. This occurs when a stream of negatively charged electrons is sent, or funneled, through a conductor, leading them to positively charged protons, so their interaction will cause electricity. In ordinary conducting materials, such as iron, copper, and other metallic substances, electrons are loosely funneled through the conductor, which loosely controls their direction. This means that that, as they are sent through ordinary conducting materials, some of these electrons are able to break away from the "stream", and crash into adjoining electrons. The impact of this collision causes energy to be generated as heat which would otherwise have become electricity.

In comparison, superconductive materials tightly control the flow of the electrons, so they aren't able to break away and collide into each other. This results in all of the electrons being used to create electricity, and that none of the potential electrical energy is lost as heat energy. An added advantage to superconductive materials is that they generate far more intense magnetic fields than ordinary conductors.

But ever since it was discovered in 1911, superconductivity was only achieved at temperatures approaching absolute zero, the temperature designated as 0 Kelvin, at which substances have no molecular motion, resulting in the total absence of heat. This meant that superconductors could not be practical for any use, since the price of maintaining such cold temperatures, in terms of both the cost of liquid helium, the only substance capable of being that cold, and the inconvenience of the big and bulky equipment required to handle it, would be prohibitive.

This has recently started to change. In 1986, scientists at IBM's Zurich Research Labs used a class of metallic oxides known as ceramics as superconductive material. This substance was able to maintain super conductivity at the temperature of 35 Kelvin, far above absolute zero. Over the past three years, the scientific community has further developed this class of ceramic compounds so they remain superconducting at temperatures up to 98 Kelvin, or Minus 283 Degrees Fahrenheit. While this might also seem prohibitively cold, it is well above the temperature at which liquid nitrogen can be used as a coolant. Liquid nitrogen is inexpensive and relatively easy to handle. This means that superconductivity could soon be in common use, and that its implications can be fully seen for the first time.

One of the most obvious benefits of superconductivity is in the production and transmission of electricity. Electrical generators make electricity by a spinning turbine which rotates a magnet in a magnetic field. If superconductors were used, not only would more electricity be made, as it could be a more powerful magnet, but none of the potential energy would be lost as heat. Also, current metallic wire in use as electrical lines can lose 5-8 percent of the electricity they transmit from power stations. If superconducting material were used in its place, no electricity would be lost, and millions of dollars in the area of

energy production would be saved. However, since current superconductors cannot maintain their superconductivity in normal conditions, changes in developments of superconductive material will be necessary before this occurs....

Magnetically levitated trains, or maglevs, are another development which stands to benefit from superconductivity. These trains can run up to 300 miles per hour because unlike ordinary trains, they levitate on a bed of magnetic fields, generated by powerful magnets positioned on the ground, and are propelled by other magnets located on both sides of the train. It is a very promising technology, as there is no danger of going off the track in a derailment, and that, unlike trains, its great speeds aren't hindered by friction caused by being in contact with the ground.

Superconducting magnets can now be used to generate more powerful magnetic fields, so these trains can go a lot faster than normally possible. Japanese maglevs currently use superconducting magnets because of this, but the equipment needed to store the liquid helium they required was very expensive. Liquid nitrogen can more easily maintain the smaller, more powerful superconducting magnets that will probably be used in maglevs. The new developments in superconductivity can even help the medical field. Magnetic resonance imagers (or MRI Scanners), which are used to take detailed pictures of human tissue, operate by using superconducting magnets. These devices have cost up to a million dollars before, mainly because of the equipment needed to store liquid helium. Now liquid nitrogen can replace liquid helium, and with much less required to store it, the price of these lifesaving devices will drop dramatically.

But even though superconductivity will quickly benefit parts of our lives, its implications will not truly be seen until materials that maintain their superconductivity at room temperature are developed. Even though the present developments in superconductivity stand to benefit mankind greatly, the fact is that it wouldn't be feasible, or efficient to force the vast majority of our technology to add on equipment to store liquid nitrogen so it will work. Electrical lines, for example, cannot use current superconductive material. In this case, room temperature superconductors would be optimal.

One very important area that would benefit from room temperature superconductors is computers. The IC's in today's computers generate a great amount of heat, with the result that most computers today require fans to keep them operational. Room temperature superconductors not only would allow them to be very compact, but could allow for much faster designs, especially in super computers. Mainframe-speed computers could be the size of laptops, as superconductors allow systems to be designed with extreme chip density, as there would be no worry of overheating, and superconductivity would allow integrated circuitry to function far more efficiently. And as computers themselves are attaining a continuously greater role in civilization, the benefits of superconductivity multiply.

Eventually, room temperature superconductors will improve our lives in the future. Space technology will vastly improve, as more powerful and efficient satellites help our technological civilization collect and transfer information, space stations become more versatile, and the prospects for colonizing the stars loom over the horizon. It will, in all certainty, be used in weapons of war, as fighters and bombers become more sophisticated, using better stealth technologies to evade and destroy the enemy. But while superconductivity is still relatively new in the research lab, its implications are infinitely vast, and at the rate of development, one cannot doubt that within the next decade, those

implications, both the ones mentioned here, and those yet to be imagined, will advance our civilization into the twenty-first century....

### Computer Security, an Internet Worm, and the Morris Trial

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Robert Tappen Morris, a former Cornell University Computer Science graduate who created a worm which crippled around 7000 Unix computers connected to the Internet computer network in November 1988, is now being tried in court. Charging that he intentionally created and released a worm into the Internet network which caused millions of dollars in damages, the prosecution intends to obtain a conviction based on the 1986 Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, which makes it a felony to cause more than \$1000 dollars in damages via a computer virus. Interestingly enough, it seems that this Law does NOT require that the damage be intentionally caused....

The alleged damages caused by the Internet worm consist of lost computing time on the Unix systems, and the wages for the computer experts needed to completely eliminate the virus from Internet. This damage has been estimated to have cost several million dollars. Interestingly enough, it seems that the Internet worm prompted the creation of several computer security agencies, which later halted the spread of many other computer viruses....

Robert Morris wrote a computer worm which was designed to defeat security flaws in the Unix operating system, and to slowly replicate itself inside systems running Berkeley Unix. It used several methods, including accessing debugging code left in E-Mail software by system administrators (or Sysops), and by accessing "back doors" built into the security program which allowed easy entry into a system. It has been determined that the ONLY effect that the Internet worm had on Unix systems was to use up an extensive amount of CPU time, which slowed system operation to a tremendous degree.

Curiously, programmers examining the source code of the Internet Worm have determined that it was actually a programming error (read: bug) that caused the worm to replicate so quickly once it was inside Unix systems. It would simply "fill up" the system with copies of them, and its copies would, in turn, replicate themselves. This process eventually took up so much CPU time that system operation ground to a halt. Morris' defense intends to use this to prove that the both the worm's release into Internet, and its replication (which caused the damage) was accidental, and did not cause permanent damage. Meaning that he may not be liable for any alleged damages....

But ponder, if you will, these questions:

- 1) How quickly does the computer industry really change, in both developing new technologies and migrating from obsolete systems?
- 2) What are ways that programmers can prevent "bugs" from popping up in programs?

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Alameda, CA  
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Sun has recently introduced a Network Bundle for the TOPS LAN Network which includes Inbox 3.0, an E-mail System, and TOPS Version 3.0. The DOS version of this update supports the Mac Hierarchical File System (HFS), and can run in extended memory....

Centram Systems, maker of the TOPS LAN Network, has also been "spun off" by Sun Microsystems into an independent subsidiary, instead of remaining a division of Sun. It seems that TOPS, an Appletalk-compatible LAN Network with a base of 60,000 users, has been under intense competition, and that Sun may plan to sell TOPS....

West Chester, PA  
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Commodore has appointed Walter Simpson as its Director for Product Marketing, and named Jeff Scherb as Vice President of CATS (Commodore Application and Technical Support). Responsible for Amiga Developer support, Jeff Scherb will be overseeing efforts to boost the Amiga software base in the fields of Unix, education, and multimedia software....

Walter Simpson, who has been involved with the computer industry for over 20 years, intends to heighten Commodore's marketing strategies for consumer and educational sales, as well as the business and Government computer markets....

Tokyo, Japan  
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Sony has announced that its News workstation, which has taken a great percentage of the Japanese workstation market, will support OSF/1, the new Unix-based OS being developed by the Open Software Foundation. Also, the OSF has confirmed that the Mach operating system (used in the NeXT computer) will be part of OSF/1....

San Jose, CA  
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U.S. Memories, a planned consortium of American computer companies which was designed to boost the U.S. DRAM chip industry, has been disbanded by Sanford Kane, its CEO, due to a lack of support. Formed in May 1988 by seven companies, including IBM, DEC, National Semiconductor, and Hewlett-Packard, U.S. Memories was to become a \$1 billion dollar venture to restore mass production in the U.S. of DRAM memory chips, in order to ensure a secure supply, and to retake some of the 75 percent of the \$9 Billion dollar DRAM Market now controlled by Japanese companies....

In order for U.S. Memories to have been formed, its member companies needed to contribute \$500 million in capital, with the rest financed by loans. But interestingly enough, the recent drop in DRAM prices

doomed the consortium, as companies like Sun and Apple rejected U.S. Memories because of the current plentiful supply of DRAM chips, and as several of its sponsor companies grew wary of its usefulness. Many analysts now say that this may indicate that American companies are more interested in short-term gains than long-term benefits....

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> PC DITTO II CPU/STR Spotlightâ € TO BE OR....NOT TO BE?  
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msgs CTSY GENie Atari ST RT

Below, is a message sent to present and future owners of the now very famous, PC DITTO II, hardware PC emulator for the Atari ST computers. by its merchandising manufacturer, Avant Garde products.

Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 183 Tue Jan 16, 1990  
AVANTGARDE at 12:56 EST

To: All PC-DITTO II owners

We have just read the message traffic for this past weekend, and it would be an understatement to say we have messed up. We apologize. For those that did not get disks, we are sending them out. Somehow, with all the parts that go into each package, a few disks were missed.

For those with boards that are not working, we are investigating the bad boards. Since the board design does work, the problem is in manufacturing. To bring you up to date, we began checking the programmed parts this morning. So far, they appear to be ok. That leaves the parts soldered on the board. As soon as we find the problem part, we will be back online immediately to let you know what we learned. Our manufacturer will have to replace or rework those boards, if a part they received from their supplier was bad.

What I can say is this, please do not damage the pc-ditto II. We can and will return your monies if they are returned as we shipped them to you. We promise that if you have a bad board, we will make it right. Soon. Please understand that this is a big undertaking and we're small. WE do answer the phone, but the calls have been long and many. Furthermore, with the bad board problem identified, we are spending all of our time trying to locate the problem and rectify it. We will not let you down. The product works well when it works. We won't leave you hanging. Please hang in there a little longer. We will have answers for all your problems.



Editor Note;

Since the advent of PCD II shipping, there has been much more than just a few complaints about a disk missing or a booklet missing. How about at the time of this writing, there is only ONE PC DITTO II that this author can literally attest to its running ok and it is thirteen hundred miles away in NYC. This one as we understand it is a pre-production version that was hand tested thoroughly prior to its delivery to Nevin Shallit a reporter for ST Informer. And I might add, the first one sent to him did not work. Incidentally, that is apparently the only version delivered in a timely manner to any publication.

It would appear that a good 90-99% of those who received the new product recently have had negative results with either the installation, the software, the booting or missing components to the product, disks, booklets etc. We have seen posts and notes from virtually all over the country from folks experiencing varying degrees of serious difficulty with this release version of PCD II. Perhaps the best thing to do would be to ship the units back to AG and await a re-release of a working version of the product. After all, since there are no warranty cards packed with the units, thus no registration per se, and after recalling the "hairsplitting" going on over the time limit on the 'special prepayment offer' it would be a wise and prudent decision to return all questionable units and please, do it with a recipient signature required.

We now present, for your perusal, the various reader reactions to the course of current events concerning the Avant Garde position taken and responses forwarded to the users....

Category 19, Topic 2

Message 201 Wed Jan 17, 1990

D.BURKHALTER at 18:57 CST

Anyone who plans to return their PCD II damaged to AG should send it back insured and certified! Just in case (I got burned by CMI but doubt AG will do this) a problem arises. Keep your stub and the slip that comes back until you have your refund. No point in losing \$154 because of stupidity. If something happens YOU are responsible proving that they received the board back. Also send a letter with the return and make a copy.

Burned before to the tune of \$300,

-Dave

Editor Note:

To clarify a point mentioned, D. Burkhalter has a considerable amount of equity involved with the now well known situation of CMI, who closed down their operations with a number of individuals left "holding the bag".

Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 202 Wed Jan 17, 1990  
E.GORELIK at 20:28 EST

Avant-Garde:

I'm not looking for a refund at the present time, but I am looking for a working unit, and my chances of receiving one among the present batch would seem to be near zero. So please be kind enough to hold up my order till you have something that you can ship with justifiable assurance. To make things easier on us both, if you've already sent me a unit I'll simply refuse delivery and ask UPS to return to sender, then wait till I hear an announcement from you that proven working units are now going out. Though, as I say, this doesn't indicate that I want a refund. Good luck on getting it all together.

I also hope to see a message from you on this thread addressing the question of to solder or not to solder and to fit inside your ST or not to fit inside your ST.

I wasn't one of those who read into your last message that you would refuse to take back any units that have already been damaged due to unfortunate attempts to cut and solder. Rather, I saw it as a cautious statement not wanting to encourage anyone to experiment irresponsibly or unnecessarily, and possibly for other reasons wishing to retain an option on deciding how to handle any given case rather than commit yourself to a policy with unknown implications. I also wasn't among those who waited with breath all but suspended for months for your long-delayed product and then mangled their ST's and ran up big bills trying to get it to work when you finally sent it out but remained inaccessible by phone or modem, but I would like to see them receive some consideration and fair play in this, damaged units or no, and I also believe they'll get it.

D. Burkhalter:

That sounds like excellent advice, though I think in this case, where I'm refusing delivery, that might be unnecessary.

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Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 203 Wed Jan 17, 1990  
B.MORTON5 at 20:30 EST

AVANT-GARDE: I received the pcditto II in good shape. UPS forwarded it to me at my new address. As for me, I am looking forward to seeing PCdittoII run. Let us all know soon what is the problem. Best Wishes.

Bev Morton

Editor Note;

Be advised, it would appear that Ms. Morton gave the unit delivered a visual and not a functioning inspection. Perhaps Ms. Morton would care to let us know how well behaved the unit is once installed.

Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 204 Wed Jan 17, 1990

L.BUDNICK

at 20:19 CST

Well, THEY say silence is golden, but, I feel that time has come to add my nickel's worth to this thread.

I, like many, sent in my \$\$\$ to Avant-Garde with the expectation of getting PCDII at a discounted rate. I had expected to see this product delivered within a month or two from the time that I submitted my check. Well, S\*\*T HAPPENS! If you have been around the computer business for any length of time at all, this is not the first time, nor will it likely be the last time a product is planned to be delivered and is LATE! Additionally, it is surely not the first time a delivered product has had major problems once it was delivered.

For those continuing to whine, mostly the same people that were whining about the product being late, you also have a responsibility for finding yourself in the position you find yourself. You are responsible for taking the RISK in sending in \$\$\$ for a product that was still being developed. I think over the course of this entire ordeal, Avant-Garde has given each of us the opportunity to change our mind and to get our money back. This offer was made during the delay in shipments and again with the discovery of the product not being operational when it finally did ship. Further, Avant-Garde has offered their apologies for the current situation, and has indicated that they are working to resolve the problems. What more can they do under the circumstances?

I ordered PCDII because I felt that AG had provided me with a quality product in PCDI. I believe that given an opportunity to get the current problems resolved, they will offer that same quality in their PCDII product. This is a risk that I think is worthwhile taking for the amount of \$\$\$ involved, and the potential benefit I will derive should I be correct. Again, this is my decision, and the responsibility for that risk continues to be mine.

I suggest if you feel you got the SHAFT and the risk is no longer worth it, quit your whining, request your money be returned, and don't waste the time of those of us who follow this thread for support from AG. If whining is your thing, go do it in category 18!

To AG, I certainly have not given up the ship. Keep on, keeping on! I for one continue to look forward to a quality product being available in the not to distant future. Thanks for your support to-date, and I am awaiting the arrival of your new product with the same FAITH as when I originally sent in my check.

Lorne.... (perhaps silent for too long, but not long enough) :-)

Editor Note;

Suffering in silence for more than a quarter of a year is a bit much, especially when the phones are emitting constant busy signals or a non-recording answering device is busy devouring customer's long distance dollars. Certainly, if people were able to reach a living responding person at the other end 3/4 of the unrest would not be evident. Nobody is asking that the ship be abandoned, they are simply asking for a life vest.....

J.ALLEN27

at 21:47 EST

Hey Nevin, I don't have an ST hooked to the phone, can you upload the SW?

I am beginning to wonder about the packaging the boards were shipped in. I haven't seen the packaging, can you describe it to me, if there was a plastic bag was it pink or did it look like "polaroid filter" material. I spend \$1 each on the antistatic super bags I ship T16s in. Maybe these things were getting zapped in shipping? I have to believe they tested these ubits before shipment, but they are definitely not happy with blitters when they are working. If you sending them back for repair, just send the big board, even if you soldered the "clip" on you can still get the main board fixed.

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Category 19, Topic 2

Message 206 Wed Jan 17, 1990

N.RECHTMAN1 at 22:25 EST

I thing AG made a big mistake not making a cartridge version or at least an external unit like Supercharger, which seems to be from what I've read really easy to use and work with AG, why don't you reconsider your poor design.

Category 19, Topic 2

Message 207 Wed Jan 17, 1990

K.MULLIKIN at 19:36 PST

Has anyone tried to get PCDII to fit with the center post removed and leaving the RFI shield out?

-----

Category 19, Topic 2

Message 208 Wed Jan 17, 1990

J.GARRISON5 at 22:37 EST

T.HESTER1,

I agree with you that the potential benefits of a working PCD II are worth waiting for, but I disagree with your assessment of the capabilities and knowledge of the various people who have received their PCD II's. While your reference to the "JCL sign" might have merit if only a small percentage of people could not understand the instructions, it is a completely inappropriate analogy in this case. So far, NO one has been able to get a production PCD II to work. That is, 100% of the people are "misunderstanding" AG's instructions. As far as I'm concerned, that falls under the category of "Poorly Written Documents". Either that, or AG has shipped defective boards and/ or software to its customers.

As far as the actual knowledge of some or all of the customers is concerned, as an electrical engineer I can tell you just from my attention to this category that several of the people out there (J.ALLEN27 in particular) are QUITE competent, full-fledged EXPERTS in these matters. But that shouldn't even come into consideration here, since PCD II was supposedly designed to be a user-installed device not requiring expert knowledge. The mere use of the phrase "self-professed experts" tends to

insult those you said you did not intend to demean. It MAY yet turn out that the "average joes" HAVE screwed up by misunderstanding AG's seemingly inadequate documentation and attention to detail in the area of packaging a complete product, but I doubt it. Your advice and thoughts on this subject, even though you obviously meant well, hit a little wide of the target.

J. Garrison

Editor Note;

Obviously, many of the 'complaints' both pro and con, involving this PCD II matter are going to reflect the charged personal feelings of those most effected by what is going on, namely those who have bought and paid for a device they now possess and it flat out does not perform at any level of expectation. This is the crux of the matter, when a user makes a purchase in the computing community he expects support and justifiably so, especially when we are looking at an 'in the field' hardware installation. Presently, most folks with a problem may call the AG phone number and expect either a non-recording answering machine or unending busy signals. This method of diligent user support soon would wear anyone's patience thin.

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Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 209 Wed Jan 17, 1990  
A.KLYM at 20:36 PST

In my attempt to install my PC-DITTO II into my old 520 ST, I removed my center post. I have not had my RF shield for some time.

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Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 210 Wed Jan 17, 1990  
W.CHOW at 23:56 EST

J.ALLEN,

i looked at the bag the board came in again, it's still pink with bubbles all over :-)

whoops! pop goes that bubble...

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Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 211 Wed Jan 17, 1990  
S.STAHL1 at 23:24 CST

At the risk of complicating matters more, I'd think that many of AG's customers deserve compensation for the money spent on the fruitless installation attempts; dealers charged from \$50 to \$100, wasn't it, for installation? I'd suggest sending copies of the bills to AG, especially if the boards have to be installed twice.

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Category 19, Topic 2  
Message 213 Wed Jan 17, 1990

F.GIOMBOLINI

at 22:45 MST

I want to repeat my plea - Please if anyone has the pcdittoII files please upload them here. I need them to check out my board. Avant Garde says its ok. I am indebted to you - thanks, Fred

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Category 19, Topic 2

Message 214 Thu Jan 18, 1990

NEVIN-S at 04:48 EST

For everyone's information, I spoke with Bill Teal last night. He is of course very aware of the problem, and is working feverishly to locate the specific culprit. He said as much here a couple of days ago, but I thought folks would like to hear it once again. He will come on line again as soon as he has any more information, and asks you to just hang in there. Anyone who returns their board will receive a refund, of course. But of course he hopes you will hold on a bit longer while he tracks down the specific problem.

Nevin

Editor Note;

While it is all well and good to allow the situation to calm itself, this process could easily be accelerated by having a "warm body" answering the telephone offering a reasonable explanation for what is actually happening. The old "personal touch" goes a mighty long way in giving good customers a reason for waiting for a much anticipated product. While it is nice to see that a few (very few) have been able to discuss this situation with Avant Garde, the majority of users nationwide have not.

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> BECKEMEYER DEVELOPMENT CPU/STR OnLineâ €  
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\*\*\*\*\* A N N O U N C E M E N T \*\*\*\*\*

SHAREWARE MULTITASKING MICRO RTX FOR THE ATARI ST!!!

(OAKLAND, CA) BECKEMEYER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS has released a version of their multitasking operating system, MICRO RTX, as shareware for the Atari ST line of computers.

MICRO RTX is a fully multitasking real-time operating system which adds multitasking extensions to TOS, Atari's native operating system. MICRO RTX can run standard TOS and GEM programs without modifications and offers additional operating system services for applications, such as interprocess communication, installable device drivers, file and record locking, device control, real-time prioritization of tasks, efficient memory management, event signaling, message passing, and much more.

Full programming documentation is included with the shareware version, including source code to "C" bindings for popular Atari ST "C" compilers.

End-user registration is a modest \$35, which includes the program disk and printed manual. Full developer status with technical support services is \$75. An advanced commercial version which includes an unlimited binary redistribution license is \$250.

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(415) 530-9637  
BBS: (415) 530-9682

In an online note from D. Beckemeyer;

Ralph (ST-Report), there's so much to MT C-Shell and VSH that it is hard to describe in a few lines of text. I don't know all the policies here on GENie yet regarding commercial announcements of that sort. I'll give a short description here and check into\ uploading some more detailed info.

MT C-Shell is an operating system for the ST. It is a general purpose multitasking/multiuser OS. It has as standard a Unix-like user interface. It has login IDs and passwords and has a command-line interface called the C shell, patterned after the Berkeley Unix C shell. Really the C shell is just a program that accepts commands and acts on them. MT C- a variety of ways, such as special configuration files, batch files etc. The unique thing about MT C-Shell is that it is TOS compatible. It emulates the TOS system and can run TOS and GEM programs.

It is also a fully multitasking system in its own right, with many advanced features -- like installable device drivers, interprocess communication, priorities, etc. etc. Because of all the "user customization" possible with the MT C-Shell system, it's hard to exactly what the system does since it can do whatever you want -- it's hard to draw the line as to what is MT C-Sell and what is an application or configuration.

Basically, MT C-Shell gives you a system where you can run commands in the background while you continue to work and it also allows you to set up your system with a modem or terminal for multiuser use. There are also hardware expansion options for up to 12-users on a Mega ST (or upgraded 1040 or 520).

VSH is a GEM "outer layer" for MT C-Shell. It includes GEM applications, accessories and device drivers for "virtual terminals" inside GEM windows, where you can have several MT C-Shell sessions visible and active at the same time on one screen. Right now, as I type in this message in one GEM window, I have other windows where I can switch over and run any commands I desire. The windows are all running at the same time, output may occur to any window asynchronously. The commands and jobs started in a window even continue to run when the window is closed and not visible - the output will be waiting there in the window when you open it again. You can also use a VSH command window from the Desk menu from within another GEM application.

Regarding upgrades, most upgrades of BDT products involve sending in the disk with a \$5 charge. The exceptions are MT C-Shell which is \$10.00 and Hard Disk Toolkit V2.00 which comes with a new manual and has an upgrade fee of \$15.00

These are the most recent versions of our software;

Micro C-Shell is 2.74, Hard Disk Toolkit is 2.04 and hard Disk Sentry is 1.20. MT C-Shell is also Version 1.20. Sentry, Hard Disk Toolkit, and VSh are also available for download by reg. owners on the BDT BBS at (415) 530-9682.

I hope this answers everyone's questions without being too long.

David -- Beckemeyer Development

CONTACT:

BECKEMEYER DEVELOPMENT TOOLS  
P.O. Box 21575  
Oakland, CA 94620  
(415) 530-9637  
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> NEODESK REVISITED! CPU/STR FOCUSâ € An interesting series of tests...  
=====

A COMPARISON OF NEODESK AND ATARI'S DESKTOP  
=====

an interesting study conducted by the folks a Gribnif...



We were sitting around the other day and decided that we had never really done a direct comparison of the speed increase of NeoDesk over the built-in desktop.

For these tests we used a Mega ST4 with the Blitter turned on. The machine was equipped with the newer TOS 1.4 and was running on a SM124 monochrome monitor. We also repeated the tests on a Moniterm Viking 2 monitor. Apart from the NeoDesk Control Panel, no other software was running (when the Moniterm was used the Moniterm driver software was also running). A plain out-of-the-box copy of NeoDesk 2.05 was used. The newer TOS 1.4 was used since it is supposed to have the latest (and fastest) version of the built-in desktop.

Since a manual stopwatch was used, there is probably error margin of about .3 second. All tests were done three times, best time of the three was used.

We created a folder with 800 files within it. This directory was then scrolled from top to bottom with a series of different options. This was done by holding the mouse over the scroll arrow and holding it down until all the files had been scrolled. When NeoDesk was used to display text all the file size, date, and time displays were left on (to be identical to the built-in desktop as possible).

On the SM124 monochrome monitor:

Type of Test	NeoDesk 2.05	Built-in Desktop
	min:secs	min:secs
With a window that was the full width of the screen and 2 icons high (show as icons).....	0:07.4	0:57.1
With a window that was the full width of the screen and 5 lines high of text (show as text).....	0:48.5	5:30.2
With a window the full size of the screen (show as icons).....	0:08.7	1:24.5
With a window the full size of the screen (show as text).....	0:58.6	6:23.8

On the Moniterm Viking 2 monitor:

Type of Test	NeoDesk 2.05	Built-in Desktop
	min:secs	min:secs
With a window that was the full width of the screen and 2 icons high (show as icons).....	0:05.7	0:37.7
With a window that was the full width of the screen and 5 lines high of text (show as text).....	0:30.7	2:17.2

With a window the full size of  
the screen (show as icons)..... 0:06.4 (see below)

With a window the full size of  
the screen (show as text)..... 0:48.31 6:07.3

It seems that the built-in desktop is has problems displaying a window the size of the Moniterm screen if it is full of icons. The built-in desktop can only display up to 249 icons in a window at the same time. If you attempt to display over 249 icons in the same window it will start behaving in some rather peculiar ways. It will refuse to scroll and when it does scroll it will do so incorrectly. Seems that no one ever bothered to see if the built-in desktop could handle a screen of the size of the Moniterm. Because of this we were unable to test its scrolling speed on a full size window on the Moniterm.

More interesting information discovered while doing these tests:

Maximum number of files viewable in a full screen window:

Type of display	NeoDesk 2.05	Built-in Desktop
-----	-----	-----
	# of files	# of files
SM124 Monochrome, Icons.....	64	49
SM124 Monochrome, Text.....	18	18
SM124, with no text, size, or date display (only NeoDesk can do this).....	72	n/a
SM124, with no options, in small text size (again, only NeoDesk can do this).....	128	n/a
Moniterm, Icons.....	368	249*
Moniterm, Text.....	147**	147**
Moniterm, no text options (only NeoDesk can do this).....	441	n/a
Moniterm, no text options in small text size (again, only NeoDesk can do this).....	880	n/a

\* Due to a bug in the built-in desktop, it will only display the first 249 icons that can fit in a window. In theory it could display a total of 300 icons.

\*\* With all file size, date, and time information displayed both the built-in desktop and NeoDesk display the information in 3 columns wide. Unlike the built-in desktop, you can turn off the multiple column display with NeoDesk.

Most of the speed increase in NeoDesk derives from one simple thing. We do not use the VDI (Virtual Device Interface) part of the Atari operating system. This is the part that handles all screen drawing, blitting, and text drawing. The built-in desktop (and just about every other program available for the ST) depend heavily on the VDI. By writing our own drawing, blitting, and text drawing routines in our own high-speed code which uses the LINEA we are able to create a MUCH faster environment. Sure this requires much more work, but we think the above

numbers speak for themselves.

For more information contact your dealer or:

GRIBNIF SOFTWARE  
PO Box 350  
Hadley, MA. 01035  
1-413-584-7887

-----> Look for Gribnif on CIS in the Atari Vendor Forum.<-----

> CPU/STR Tech Notesâ ¢ 5 1/4 drive connections.....  
=====

Correct Pinout to add your own 5 1/4 drive to the ATARI ST.

34 Pin Drive Connector	Atari 14 Pin Din Connector	Signal
2 - - - - -	- - - - - * - - - - -	Media Change
4 - - - - -	- - - - Not USED!! - - - - -	In Use
6 - - - - -	- - - - Not USED!! - - - - -	D3 Select
8 - - - - -	- - - - - 4 - - - - -	Index Pulse
10 - - - - -	- - - - - 5 - - - - -	D0 Select
12 - - - - -	- - - - - 6 - - - - -	D1 Select
14 - - - - -	- - - - Not USED!! - - - - -	D2 Select
16 - - - - -	- - - - - 8 - - - - -	Motor ON
18 - - - - -	- - - - - 9 - - - - -	Direction
20 - - - - -	- - - - - -10 - - - - -	Step
22 - - - - -	- - - - - -11 - - - - -	Write Data
24 - - - - -	- - - - - -12 - - - - -	Write Gate
26 - - - - -	- - - - - -13 - - - - -	Track 00
28 - - - - -	- - - - - -14 * - - - - -	Write Protect
30 - - - - -	- - - - - 1 - - - - -	Read Data
32 - - - - -	- - - - - 2 - - - - -	Side Select
34 - - - - -	- - - - - Not USED! - - - - -	Ready/Media cng
(Any ODD Pins)-	- - - - - 3 and 7 - - - - -	Logic Ground

\* NOTE!!!

A jumper Must be installed between pins 2 and 28 of the drive itself This connects the Media Change Signal to the Write protect signal. This is required only if you intend on removing a disk, inserting a new one and getting a new directory by hitting the (ESCAPE) key.

---

> FTL RESPONDS! CPU/STR Spotlightâ € FTL tries hard to satisfy!  
=====

THE FINE ART OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION  
=====

FTL Replies;

News Flash from Gestapo Headquarters!

- - -

Regarding the debate over my request to stop uploading saved games. I think I can propose an alternate solution. As I mentioned before, my concern is primarily protecting our copyrights. I really don't want to discourage people from trading Champions. However, currently the saved game file contains more than the Champion stats. In discussing this with my staff we came up with the idea of creating a utility that would extract only the Champion data from a game file and convert it into a form that could be uploaded and directly read by the Chaos Strikes Back Utility disk. Would this be an acceptable solution?

Editor Note;

to FTL....

Not only is the solution offered by you (FTL) excellent, it also illustrates clearly, for all to see, why this company is the success it is.. These good people recognize the true value of customer support and offer themselves to this ends unselfishly. Many thanks are offered for a quick and equitable solution. Your sense of humor is to be applauded. Your handling of this entire situation could easily be a lesson in diplomacy and good will all of us can learn from. Again, thanks.

-----\*\*-----

Regarding the Champion picture files.

Here, is a description of the format of these files.

(All offsets in bytes)

offset	0:	0x91A7	Magic number for Portrait file
offset	2:	0x000A	System reserved use
offset	4:	0x0001	Identifies file originates from Atari ST
offset	6:	0x0001	System reserved use
offset	8:	0x0001	System reserved use

offset 10: 0x0000 System reserved use  
offset 12: 0x0000 System reserved use  
offset 14: 0x0000 System reserved use  
offset 16: "NICKNAME",0 Nickname (8 bytes total incl zero delim)  
offset 24: "CHAMP TITLE",0 Title (20 bytes total incl zero delim)  
offset 44: portrait data See note 3.

- - -

Notes:

1. Title is optional (first byte may be zero), but all Champions must have a NICKNAME (offset 16)
2. Valid characters for nickname or title are uppercase A-Z, comma, period, semicolon, colon, and space.
3. Portrait is 464 bytes (32 pixels wide by 29 lines tall) saved in Atari planar format as follows:  
line 1 <16 bit plane 0> MSB is leftmost pixel  
    <16 bit plane 1>  
    <16 bit plane 2>  
    <16 bit plane 3>  
line 2 <16 bit plane 0> LSB is rightmost pixel  
    <16 bit plane 1>  
    <16 bit plane 2>  
    <16 bit plane 3>  
Lines 2-29 repeat as above.

4. Color palette is not saved in file but is assumed to be as follows:

color 0: 0x0000 Black  
color 1: 0x0333 gray  
color 2: 0x0444 gray  
color 3: 0x0310 brown  
color 4: 0x0066 cyan  
color 5: 0x0420 brown  
color 6: 0x0040 green  
color 7: 0x0060 green  
color 8: 0x0700 red  
color 9: 0x0750 gold  
color 10: 0x0643 flesh  
color 11: 0x0770 yellow  
color 12: 0x0222 gray  
color 13: 0x0555 gray  
color 14: 0x0007 blue  
color 15: 0x0777 white

- - -

If anyone writes any useful utilities with this info I'd like to receive a copy. Send it to:

Wayne Holder  
C/O Software Heaven Inc.  
6160 Lusk Blvd. Suite C-206  
San Diego, Calif 92121.

> THE BEAT GOES ON CPU/STR Spotlightâ € When, sweet William, when?  
=====

LOOMING ON THE HORIZON, THE MUSHROOM PATCH!  
=====

by R.F. Mariano

The indecision, the vascillation, the obvious lack of direction....  
and the most detrimental, a total lack of continuity in inter-departmental  
communication are going to be our ruination. (recently overheard in the  
far reaches of the west coast at a certain fortune 500 computer company)

In the past we have read;

"Atari, in keeping with Sam Tramiel's promise that the US was Atari's main  
market and that "ATARI WAS BACK" in the US, introduced two new computers  
in Dusseldorf Germany, THE WEEK AFTER THE ATARIFEST IN DALLAS TEXAS."

"The Atari Show in Dusseldorf Germany was a great success for Atari.  
There were lots and lots of exhibitors and people. The diversity of  
the programs being shown at this show were simply amazing. There were  
ST's driving knitting machines, making vinyl signs, playing music,  
designing all kinds of tech things, word processors up the kazoo, and  
all kinds of top quality, serious software."

"Atari had 4 STE's and 4 TT's at the show. The STE's were playing 2  
Atari games that were not impressive (graphics wise) The TT's had one  
(single screen) demo that also was not very impressive. It was  
interesting that Maxtor, a German company, had a board there that they  
plan to sell in week or two that had graphics comparable (better?)  
than the TT and they had some really nice graphics demos to put on  
their screen (digitized on a MAC II). Their board was very  
impressive."

Response at the show was NOT VERY FAVORABLE TO THE STE.

Comments heard included:

"The STE brings the ST's graphics and sound up to the level of the  
Amiga 500".

"It's too little to late" . "The STE should have been put on sale 2  
or 3 years ago, its already outdated!"

A major English newspaper mentioned that they doubted if anyone  
would write software for the STE and if there was no software why would  
anyone purchase the STE?

"The TT was more impressive but with everyone accustomed to Atari

showing products a year or two before release, people were NOT overly excited. The case had an unusual design that looked nice but did not seem to be very functional. Most people seemed to think the TT was there more to keep people from abandoning Atari more than that it was close to being ready for sale. It was interesting to find that for the past year everytime one heard the expression "TT" they also heard about how it would have UNIX and be expandable (read: card slots) but the TT at Dusseldorf did not have UNIX and could not be expanded. According to Atari, the expandable Unix version of the TT will be along 3-6 months after the first TT is sold." ....sure but when? And where??

"The ST in Germany is, and at the same time, was considered a hi-tech, state of the art, business machine. The vast majority of the computers sold, are sold with a mono monitor. But the German folks feel that Atari has lost the price and performance advantage that it once had over other computers. Sales of the Megas and ST's are slowing in their computer stores. So Atari Germany went and sold a bunch of 520's to a large discount chain store. (where has that happened before??) This caused the dealers to get even more upset but managed to keep Atari Germany's sales up over last year. It seems to be, Atari Germany is losing computer dealers equally as fast as they are in the USA."

"Interesting thing about this is that Atari Germany has made up a special "blue box" for the 520 with nice graphics and bundled some software with it. Very similar to what Atari England has been doing. The only difference is that all the Ataris sold in England are for the home market. The vast majority of computers sold in England are 520's with a color monitor."

IT LOOKS LIKE ATARI HAS FIGURED OUT THE BEST WAY TO SELL THE 520'S IS TO BUNDLE SOME SOFTWARE WITH THEM AND SELL THEM AT A DISCOUNT TO CHAIN AND DISCOUNT STORES. --> THE POWER PACK DEAL <--

But rather than really going after this market they are coming out with a top of the line Unix machine. What do they really want to do? Sell 520's to discount stores or sell TT's to computer stores." Perhaps both.....

-----\*\*-----

The above commentary first appeared in SEPTEMBER of 1989, regarding the undefined plans of Atari and its international marketing goals. The sad part is here we are already into the first quarter of 1990, and everything that was speculated in the above passage seems to have been cast in stone! Even down to the "broken promise syndrome." "WE WILL RELEASE IN THE USA FIRST" As time has shown, this statement became the punch line to the slogan "Atari is back". Obviously, both became the "JOKE OF THE YEAR".

It appears as if Atari's marketing plan is to sell discounted 520's, bundled with at least 10-12 software packages, to discount stores and mail order houses. Until the TT is released, how will the loyal dealers survive? Do they think all the dealers will eagerly return and line up to purchase the new "STE" & "TT" computer lines when and if they become available in the USA? You can bet your bottom dollar that as soon as the TT ensemble is generally available the mega style and type ST computer will go the way of the DoDo bird. (Remember the 800XL-130XE scheme?) Oh sure, there are those who will say otherwise, but face reality, you cannot stop progress ..no matter how much it hurts. Even if its not perceived as progress. Is it really progress? Or simply a lateral move to market already passe designs?

Its becomes very interesting to note that in Germany, the ST is sold as a business machine, in England it is sold as a home computer/game machine, and in the US it is sold as a computer.

As we grope about in the quagmire of;

- o what is type accepted and what is not.
- o which product is on the mass marketer's shelves.
- o which version of the Portfolio is going to survive.
- o whether or not the STE will be in the mega style case.
- o when these new products will be on sale.
- o when the national advertising (TV) will occur.

These are but a few of the constantly asked questions we are posed with week in and week out, it is easy to see where the users and potential users are being driven to other markets. It is time to really begin to push Atari and its leadership to the threshold of new added success despite themselves. Regretfully, it is easy to see where they haven't really learned a darn thing from 1989, the rank politics are still in evidence, the non-sense of who is trying to "shine" in the bosses' eyes continues at an unbridled pace and those who are involved are far to busy with their dumb corporate in-fighting to grasp the everyday, real life happenings in the computer world that really count. It is absolutely absurd to see a fortune 500, 400 million dollar corporation represented on almost all fronts by amateurs. Atari must clean up its image and do it with much haste.

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> ATARI'S IMAGE CPU/STR SOUND OFFâ € A candid opinion...  
=====

THE IMAGE OF ATARI  
=====

by Dave Scarpa

There has been much made of the fact that the Atari line of computers are not taken seriously as powerful personal computers. Some blame Atari's long association with the video Game Market. Some also blame the fact that image doesn't fit in with the IBM suit and tie crowd. If Atari is aiming to hit more of the business crowd with its line of PC's, then they are indeed missing the mark. I make that comment because I believe the dealers could go along way in furthering Atari's cause by improving their own image.

I speak specifically of a dealer in my area. And I am not saying that



all dealers are the same. When you walk into my local dealer's shop the first thing that greets you are sales people often wearing very casual clothing, usually jeans and tees. Now I am not saying that these individuals do not know their product, I know they are quite well versed, however I doubt if an executive who is looking to invest lots of money for his company will think so. I know from being in the retail business that the image you present to the consumer goes along way to influence their opinions of your product.

Once you get by the sales people what greets you next is a shop which is always quite a mess. In evidence are broken computers on workbenches with their innards hanging out, not a sight to likely to convey confidence in possible new customers! The place also is generally in a state of disarray, parts strewn here and there, along with the items that they've come out of.

I am not on a personal attack of Atari dealers and I hope most dealers operate with a measure of professionalism, for if the Atari line is ever to be given its due, then the dealers, the lifeblood of Atari, must be the ones who convey this message to the consumer. To do so the dealers must be ready to lift Atari's image above that of a gaming machine and hacker's delight, to one of a serious PC. To accomplish this task dealers must be ready to present themselves in the most professional way they can and shed the old image of a computer hobbyist, and present a new one as a computer professional.

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> "THE MOUSE" CPU/STR Review & Practical Solutions' Infrared beauty.  
=====

by Lloyd E. Pulley

Last week, CPU/STR had a so-called 'review' of Practical Solutions' new Cordless Mouse. After reading this 'review', I came to the conclusion that it was more of a press release than a review. It told you everything you ever wanted to know about Practical Solutions', a little about their new Infrared technology but almost nothing about the Cordless Mouse (aka The Hamster). The following are a few pieces of information that I found lacking in the CPU/STR article, things that I felt were needed to make a good review....

First, there was no description of the mouse or it's receiver. After reading the review, a reader didn't know if the mouse was 8" x 5" x 2" or 4" x 2.5" x 1" (the later is the closest).

The mouse is approximately the same width as the Atari mouse, a little bit longer (about 3/8") and a trifle shorter (about 1/2"). It fits very

nicely in the palm of the average adults hand. The receiver is about 2.25" x 2.5" x 1" and what little power that it uses is drawn from the mouse port on the ST. The receiver comes with a cord that is approximately 3 ft. long (1.5 meters according to the specifications ....but what red-blooded American knows how long that is? Give me feet/inches any day of the week!). The cord is long enough that you can put the receiver just about anywhere you want. Both the mouse and the receiver are a nice light-grey color; just a little lighter than the normal ST/Mega case.

Two, the 'review' told you nothing about what type of power the mouse uses. Does it use 22 9-volt batteries or just two AAA batteries?

The Cordless mouse will work with two AAA batteries (not included). I've found the best ones to be the new Alkaline's (according to a recent Consumer Report article that I read, all Alkaline batteries are just about the same....but I degress). The average user will get 6-8 weeks from a set of Alkaline batteries. A user that uses their computer 10-16 hours a day will probably have to replace them a little more often. Just like anything else, there will be some users that get 6 months from a set of batteries and others that will only get two weeks, but the average should be 6-8 weeks. Also, you can use the rechargeable batteries with the Cordless Mouse. Of course, since these have less power (1.25v compared to 1.5v for a non-rechargeable), they will be replaced more often. Under normal conditions, a rechargeable battery should last 7-10 days. The batteries fit in the underside of the mouse and are very easy to replace (my wife has 2" nails and has no problem replacing the batteries).

Third, nothing was said about the special anti-static silicon rubber coated ball that almost eliminates the need for cleaning the mouse (I've had my cordless mouse for over two months now and I still haven't cleaned the rollers/ball and I had to clean my Atari mouse almost every week). Plus, this special ball allows the mouse to roll very freely and smoothly.

Fourth, nothing was said about the 600 mm/sec tracking speed. The Cordless Mouse receiver has a built-in micro-processor that will internally increase the acceleration the faster you move the mouse. This almost eliminates the need for most software mouse accelerators.

Fifth, also ignored was the fact that the Cordless Mouse has a 200 cpi high resolution. This is almost double what the normal Atari mouse. This means that you don't have to move the mouse as far to do things on the screen or need as much desk space.

Sixth, nothing was said about how the mouse automatically shuts-off after 8-10 minutes of non-use. This feature was put in to save the batteries life. (It's possible in future versions of the Cordless Mouse that this might be a user modifiable feature.)

Seventh, nothing was said about being able to use the mouse from up to five feet away from the receiver (you're no longer encumbered by a cord). At one PHAST meeting (PHoenix Area ST users...<plug>) I was able to set a demo up on the desk and then set in the audience and run the demo.

Eighth, nothing was said about the price of the Cordless Mouse. It retails for \$139.00 but you can pick them up mail-order for \$99-\$109. That does make it one of the more expensive mice (mice? meese?) on

the market. Is it worth it? Let me put it this way, my wife would kill me (and probably be found not-guilty by reason of justifiable homicide) if I ever got rid of my Cordless Mouse (Audry II). After a couple of days of use (yes, it does take a little while to get used to it...just like it would take a couple of days to get used to a Jaguar if you'd been used to driving a Model T), my wife started referring to the old Atari mouse as 'The Tank!'.

That about does it. I've done reviews before, but this is the first time I've ever reviewed a review.

Lloyd E. Pulley, Sr.

Well, Lloyd, now that you have 'reviewed the review' I must admit you made the difference... hopefully, folks will try this infrared beaut out. Mark at Practical Solutions has a real winner in the works with the cordless mouse.

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> Stock Market ~ CPU NewsWireâ €  
=====

THE TICKERTAPE  
=====

by Michael Arthur

Concept by Glenn Gorman

Atari Stock went up 1/2 of a point on Monday, and went down 1/8 of a point on Tuesday. On Wednesday it was down 1/4 of a point, and on Thursday, it went up 1/8 of a point. On Friday, Atari Stock went down 3/4 of a point. Finishing up the week at 8 3/4 points, Atari stock is down 1/2 of a point from the last report.

Apple Stock is down 3 1/4 points from Friday, January 5, 1990.

Commodore Stock is down 1 1/2 points from 1/05/90.

IBM Stock is down 1 7/8 points from 1/05/90.

Stock Report for Week of 1/08/90 to 1/12/90

STock	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
Reprt	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.	Last	Chg.

-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Atari	9 3/4 + 1/2	9 5/8 - 1/8	9 3/8 - 1/4	9 1/2 + 1/8	8 3/4 - 3/4
					101,800 Sls
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
CBM	9 5/8 - 1/8	8 7/8 - 5/8	8 5/8 - 1/4	8 1/2 - 1/8	8 1/4 - 1/4
					266,800 Sls
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Apple	38 + 1/4	37 5/8 - 3/8	36 -1 5/8	34 1/2 -1 1/2	34 1/2 .00
					1,534,800 Sls
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
IBM	100 3/8 +5/8	99 3/8 - 1	99 - 3/8	99 7/8 +7/8	97 7/8 - 2
					1,347,700 Sls
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Short term interest in Atari stock has been low thus placing it in similar light to Texas Air etc...

'Sls' refers to the # of stock shares that were traded that day.  
'CBM' refers to Commodore Corporation.

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> WORD FLAIR!! CPU/STR FOCUSâ ¢ A few words from its creator....  
=====

WORD FLAIR - PLANS FOR THE FUTURE  
=====

Mon Jan 15, 1990 WORDFLAIR

From: Lauren Flanagan-Sellers  
Blue Chip Software Inc.

Howdy! Sorry I took so long to reply to all your messages. We still have not received any GENie documentation, and I just haven't had time until now to figure it out myself. Thank you Lloyd and Jeff for passing on our telephone conversations in my absence.

First, I'd like to thank all of you for your interest in Wordflair and for buying our product. I designed the product nearly four years ago, and we have spent the past two years coding for the Atari. So we are happy it's finally out, and find all of the interest and comments gratifying ..even the complaints. We are committed to making Wordflair the best document processor on any machine, so keep those ideas and suggestions flowing. We're listening!

Perhaps a little history will clarify some of our design decisions.

We originally licensed Wordflair to Atari. As a small development house, we thought it better to focus on product and let Atari use its marketing "muscle" to help us achieve maximum distribution. The ST market was just unfolding, and we thought that such a great machine would take some market share away from Apple. We didn't think we were a big enough company to sell our software to Atari's projected "jillions of users." And .. MacWrite had certainly gotten a big assist from Apple and Claris, so we thought the same idea would work with Atari. In hindsight, perhaps that was a naive position.

At any rate, one of Atari's covenants was that Wordflair be a GDOS product. As part of our agreement, Atari was to supply GDOS, printer drivers, a spellchecker, and hyphenation dictionaries in different languages. For a variety of reasons we terminated our agreement with Atari just before COMDEX. It was an amicable, mutual termination and we remain on excellent terms with Atari. However, the net result was that we had to launch Wordflair 1.0 with GDOS and a limited number of printer drivers, and minus Atari's spellchecker. That is why Wordflair's initial SRP is the rather low, \$99.95. In our view, Wordflair 1.0 is an excellent solution to the creation of short, compound documents, and offers real value to Atari users.

We plan significant upgrades to Wordflair over the next year. We have a long wish list and will add your comments and suggestions as we go along. Just make sure that you send in your customer registration cards so that you will be able to take advantage of the attractive offers coming very soon.

We will mail out FX-80 and NB15 printer drivers along with a maintenance upgrade, version 1.01, to all registered users this week. The FX-80 printer driver should have been on the distribution disk but was inadvertently omitted. Please excuse our error. We should have checked out the master disk Atari gave us more carefully. It won't happen again, I promise. The upgrade fixes a bug that we missed in our testing. (SIGH)

In version 1.0 the printer fonts were not closed completely upon exiting which could interfere with other GDOS programs for those of you using multiple assign.sys files. This problem has been fixed with version 1.01. As a temporary workaround, you can reboot after using Wordflair and before using another GDOS program.

As Lloyd Pulley has told you, we are working on more printer drivers including support for 24 pin printers and the HP deskjet. We are also in the process of evaluating spellcheckers and thesauri. We are currently leaning toward Proximity. As soon as we complete our evaluation and have a firm ship date, we will send a mailing to all registered users offering a very attractive upgrade price for the new features. Other features coming include postscript support, hyphenation, faster importation of .img files and importation of comma delimited format into our record files.

The following are answers to Tom Moore's questions and comments:

Although you cannot overlap regions, you can imbed them like the children's barrel game. Try imbedding text regions in the white space of graphic regions to add comments or text to imported meta or .img files. Set the grid to scale first, and turn snap on to help align the imbedded regions. Overlapping regions are on our list but will not be among the first upgrades. We do plan a number of improvements to the handling of .img files including auto optimization. For now, note the dimensions of the original and draw out a graph region of the same size using a scaled

grid, snap and t-square before importing the file. You can remove any imported graphic by double clicking on the graph region at the "Remove Picture?" box. Also doing macro page layout in the title mode speeds the redraw significantly when positioning graphics.

The term "regions" originated with the Xerox Parc interface, Alan Kay's group. Regions is a term widely used in Macintosh software programming and object oriented programming in general.

That's all for now. Will try to be less wordy in the future but I had some catching up to do. We will put a Wordflair demo on GENie soon so keep looking.

Thank you again for all of your support. I look forward to communicating with you often via GENie.

Lauren Flanegan-Sellers

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> AUA NEWSBRIEFS CPU/STR InfoFileâ ¢ AUA \* OFFICIAL \* Updates.....  
=====

ATARI USERS ASSOCIATION  
=====

NEWSBRIEFS  
=====

by D.C. Signorini

Once again I will start this column by thanking all of you who have taken the time to write or call me concerning the revamping of the Atari User's Association. When I first considered taking on this project, I was a bit concerned about not generating enough support. I am, however, happy that I did decide to take on the AUA!

I would like to take this time to change a request that I originally made concerning the people who had sent their application's in prior to December 1989. In my first article, I stated that it would not be necessary to send in a new application. Due to some loss of data during the transition of the AUA from New Jersey to Pittsburgh, I am requesting that EVERYONE take the time, and the .25 cent stamp and send in your applications again. Because we plan on offering PRE-DECEMBER 1989 AUA members an extension or a special offering, I want to be certain that all of the data that I have at this time is correct and that no one will be left out. So, if you have already sent in your application prior to December, 1989, then I need you to take a moment and fill out the new application and send it to me. If you have not as of now sent in your

application, then what are you waiting for??

I attempted to give Bob Brodie a call this week, however, much to my dismay, I got his answering machine. Bob is at the NAMM show and will be un-available until January 22. I intend to give him a call at that time to discuss the future of the AUA and the, much anticipated, support of Atari Corp.

This past week, a gentleman from Wisconsin called me to inquire about the AUA. He was a bit concerned in that he felt as though the AUA may become a capital venture and will be solely interested in turning a profit. People, while I encourage feedback of all types, I must be able to stress to you that this is far from the truth. The AUA was re-formed to unite the Atari Community. The Atari Elite, the user group that has elected to back me and my efforts in the AUA is a non-profit organization. I have no intention of making the AUA a money making venture. I have stated before, my sole goal is to unite the ST community under one name. If any profit is made, it will be turned back into the AUA to make it better and stronger. The more funds that I can generate by membership, the more benefits I will be able to offer the entire community. Granted, a newsletter published only 4 times a year will hardly keep anyone in touch with the world. However, it is a start. In time, with your support, I wish to publish that newsletter 12 times a year. But as you know, this takes a lot of hard work by us and of course, strong support from you.

Somehow the AUA application got published before the information about joining the AUA and much to my dismay, I am sure that many people were a bit confused or did not know what was going on. Well, finally, the information about membership is here. Again, you can join the AUA for free or you can show support by taking advantage of the other 2 packages. You have nothing to lose if you join for free!

This week, I regretfully accepted the 'resignation' of Joe Muha, Public Relations Officer of the AUA. I am very grateful for all the help that Joe gave me in getting the AUA off of the ground again, however, Joe found very little time, in his busy schedule, left to devote to the AUA. He has promised to return in a few months. I wish Joe all of the luck in his new career and congratulate him for graduating from College.

::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::::

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter upon request in order to clarify some events that have occurred in the past 3 or so months concerning the Atari User's Association.

In the later part of 1989, when the AUA was first placed up for grabs by R. Guidagno, I was first to offer my support by taking over the organization with the backing of the Atari Elite of Pittsburgh. While I am still very enthusiastic about the success of the AUA, I have found that I have very little time to devote to the organization and instead of giving a half-hearted effort, I have decided to take a back seat so to speak for a while until I graduate from college and get settled in my new home in Cleveland, OH.

I am very confident that DC Signorini will continue on with the AUA in a positive direction, and I have agreed to work with Derek when I am able to help with new ideas and how-to's. I am very appreciative of all of the support that I received from the Forem crossnets, and I am sure

that the AUA will be a huge success. I hope that in 6 or 7 months I will again be able to be a leader in the AUA, but for now, I need to take the time to get started in my new career. I wish Derek the best of luck in his new endeavour, and I also hope that all of the Atari people give him the support that he needs to get the AUA off of the ground again!

Sincerely,

Joseph V. Muha

Director, Public Relations  
Atari User's Association

.....

That's it for this week. Remember, I can be reached on GENie and Compuserve. I am also working on getting a third phone line to facilitate better service to the users calls. Below you will find the AUA information pack and the AUA application...

Always Atari,  
Derek C. Signorini  
AUA Coordinator

GENie: DC.SIGNORINI FIDO 129/96.2: DC Signorini CIS : 72327,1060  
Fnet node #19: DC Signorini

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#### Information Pack

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- o Enhanced Access time on the Atari Elite BBS supporting 19,200 baud, 120 megs online, FIDO, and FNET.
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- o Special group discounts at Microtyme
- o Special purchase prices offered by the AUA. Once again, numbers talk!
- o Special mailings from both the Atari Elite and the AUA.
- o ANY AND ALL BENEFITS of being a member





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DRIVES : [ ]DSDD [ ]SSDD [ ]HARD DRIVE Model/Size:\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTER : [ ]9 Pin Dot Matrix [ ]24 Pin Dot Matrix [ ]Laser [ ]DeskJet  
Printer Model:\_\_\_\_\_  
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----- Clip Here -----

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> GDOS EXPLAINED CPU/STR InfoFileâ€¢
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John Townsend posted the following information regarding G-Dos in response to a series of questions from L. E. Pulley.

Lloyd,

Let me explain a few things about GDOS to you.

1. The ASSIGN.SYS file: This file is nothing more than a listing of the various device drivers and the corresponding fonts that are loaded whenever an application calls them. Now, let's talk a little about some of the questions you had:

a. Each device driver is a file on the disk that is loaded. They each have an 8 character filename and a 3 character extender. If you look at one of your ASSIGN.SYS files, you will notice that the device drivers are the unusual looking lines as they have numbers in front of the filename. They usually look like this:

```
21 PRINTER.SYS                ; Printer Driver for SLM804
```

The driver line is usually followed by lines that look like this:

```
ATSS10LS.FNT
ATSS12LS.FNT
ATSS20LS.FNT
31 META.SYS                   ; META Driver for Easy Draw
```

You will notice that the last line is another driver. This is the start of another section that consists of the driver and the fonts that are used by that driver.

b. You expressed some confusion over the use of the drivers and what they actually did. Well, each driver is given a device number in the ASSIGN.SYS file. This is also an Atari standard that is defined in the Developer's Documentation and the GDOS Installation manual. The standard is as follows:

Device Identification Numbers  
-----

Device Type -----	Device Number -----
Screen	1 - 10
Plotter	11 - 20
Printer	21 - 30
MetaFile	31 - 40
Camera	41 - 50
Tablet	51 - 60

As you can see, this is why your printer drivers have device

numbers like 21 and 23. Now, a word of caution. Most of the GDOS Programs out there count on your Printer being device 21 and will have problems printing if you don't have the device defined as Device 21. There are programs out there (like OUTPRINT.PRg from MiGraph) that will allow you to change the device number to print to.

As for what a META.SYS file is.. This is a driver for MetaFiles and should be defined as device 31. This is where most GDOS applications expect this device driver to be located. As for what a METAfile is.. well, a METAfile is a stored picture of VDI Commands. The most common example I can give you is the .GEM files that Easy Draw creates. These are MetaFiles.

- c. As for your GEMSYS folders, we should clear that up right now. You only need one GEMSYS folder. This folder can contain all of the fonts and drivers you ever use. To fix this problem, you are going to have to figure out which set of screen fonts printer fonts, and drivers you wish to use and then create an ASSIGN.SYS file accordingly. This is not an easy problem to solve. If you would like help with this, please leave me Email and I will try to help. But, there is no reason to have 6 different ASSIGN.SYS files. You really only need one.
- d. You will notice that DeskSet II uses a driver called MEMORY.SYS This driver is a special driver that allows an application to treat memory as a GDOS device and then do VDI commands to memory. To my knowledge this driver is only used with DeskSet II.

-- John

PS. Lloyd, keep those questions coming! I am going to get you setup properly with GDOS if I have to call your house on my own time and spend three or four hours setting you up! <grin>

-----

Lloyd,

\* Ding \*

GDOS: Round 2! <grin> Anyway, this is fun! Let me try to answer some of these questions!

The META.SYS driver should be in your ASSIGN.SYS file and located as device 31. You should just put it in the ASSIGN.SYS and not worry about it. Any application that needs to use it will look for it and find it. It won't affect the applications that don't use it.

Most of the GDOS applications out there assume that your printer is defined as GDOS device number 21. So, you and your friend some have the printer defined in the ASSIGN.SYS file as device 21. The only problem you could run into is if you had two printers (like an SLM804 and some Dot Matrix Printers) and had them hooked up at the same time. The only way you could do this would be to install the default printing device as Device 21. The other could be device 22 or 23. A word of warning tho, most GDOS applications assume a device number of 21. The only one that I know of that doesn't is OUTPRINT.PRg (the printing program for Easy

Draw). So, if you had two printers and needed to use both under GDOS then this would might be a case for two ASSIGN.SYS files. Is this making sense? If not, please say so... maybe I can clear this up later.

The Printer Driver does control the output on the printer. However, the Printer Driver has to get it's fonts from somewhere, so it loads them off disk. Therefore, an additional reason for bad quality could be poorly designed fonts.

Maybe I should take a second and explain what GDOS does. GDOS stands for Graphic Device Operating System. What this means in English <grin> is that GDOS is a method for allowing devices to interface to the VDI. VDI stands for Virtual Device Interface. The whole idea behind VDI is that it allows you to do \_device independant\_ output to devices. This means that you can still have programs that worked on 180x180 DPI Dot Matrix Printers still work years later when you have 1000DPI Laser Printers and the only thing that would change would be the driver and fonts for the printing device. The program would need NO changes at all. (assuming it is written properly to begin with)

So, to sum up what GDOS does in one sentence.. GDOS is the Interface that allows you to hook up devices to the VDI and do Device Independent output to them. Is this making any sense at all? Is this looking like Greek? Am I talking to myself? <grin>

One comment I would like to make.. GDOS isn't perfect and I don't want to give anyone the impression that I think it is. It has some flaws that need fixing and hopefully we will get to those soon (please don't ask me when.. you should know better! <grin>)

On a final note, thanks for asking some great questions and keep them coming. This is fun and maybe the readers will learn something!

-- John Townsend  
Atari Corp.

PS. I can see it now.. John's little GDOS Talk: As told to Lloyd Pulley!  
<grin>

Oops.. I missed a couple of questions.. Darlah.. The GDOS Installation Utility is shipped with Microsoft Write and is an Atari Product. I will see what I can find out about it's release, etc.

I also would like to point out that there is NO such thing as a stupid question! Please ask. I will answer anything I can. Well, until next time...

---

> CPU NEWSWIRE CONFIDENTIALâ € Sayin' it like it is.....  
=====

- Sunnyvale, CA.

\*\*\*\*\* MARKEN COMMUNICATIONS FIRED!!! \*\*\*\*\*

-----

In a surprising and devastating revelation, we found that Atari Corp. has, in its infinite wisdom, fired perhaps the best public relations firm ever representing Atari Corp. The information comes from a very reliable source, that Sam fired Andy Marken and his company effective Feb. 01 1990. Apparently the revolving door is moving even better than we thought. While on the subject, there are strong indications that the door will not slow down as there are three more prime candidates headed its way.

- Sunnyvale, CA.

\*\*\*\*\* ATARI WILL ATTEND CEPS & SEYBOLD \*\*\*\*\*

-----

According to our source, Atari has had a change of heart, and is now planning on attending these shows. Its nice to see someone out there is tuned into reality and plans to help Atari polish its image and grow in 1990.

- New York City, N.Y.

\*\*\*\*\* STE UN-ANNOUNCED FEATURES! \*\*\*\*\*

-----

CPU NewsWire's sources have come through in fine style once again. It seems the STE has a number of marvelous features that have gone quietly un-publicized! Here's the scoop... First, the 4096 color control panel is out. Also, the TOS 1.6 bug fix program is also out. Also, I saw technical docs for the STE. It has some more hidden features which Atari has not told anyone about yet, such as a built in digital master volume control, and even bass and treble controls for the audio!

- Timonium, MD.

\*\*\*\*\* PORTFOLIO UPGRADE IN THE WINGS? \*\*\*\*\*

-----

An internal Portfolio memory upgrade you say? Sounds interesting. Could be they changed 62256s to 621024s. Suddenly, you have 512K with no noticable power consumption increase. And who said there would never be a '286 version of the Portfolio? Ah.. yes the big question is; will the newer Portfolio be compatible with the early versions? Could these be the reasons we are seeing the original device on sale in discount houses already? (ie; Price Savers) The answer is ....YES (watch all the denials fly, until, that is, the actual deals hit the streets)

- Los Angeles, CA.

\*\*\*\*\* PROMINENT DEVELOPER MIFFED! \*\*\*\*\*

-----

Charles F. Johnson, in a recent statement expressed his displeasure with editor and publisher of ST Informer, a monthly ST oriented hard copy publication.

To Rod McDonald,

I really didn't appreciate the cheap shot you took at me in the "Potpourri" column of the latest ST Informer. If we're going to start playing the game of "who stole ideas from whom", I can mention more than one feature of the Start Selector/Little Green Selector (or of CodeHead Software's MultiFile/MaxiFile) that seems to have mysteriously found its way into UIS II or III. But I won't, because I don't like playing that game.

"Whining" was a very apt title indeed for that section of your column. Your remarks were uncalled-for, untrue, and unprofessional. I'm disappointed in you and in ST Informer; I thought your magazine was a cut above this kind of inane backbiting. Apparently not.

Charles F. Johnson  
Little Green Footballs Software

Editor Note;

<sigh> somebody ought to tell Mr. McDonald, some things are better left unsaid..

- Sunnyvale, CA.

\*\*\*\*\* POWER PACK CONCEPT MAY NOT HAPPEN HERE \*\*\*\*\*

-----

The "Power Pack" is the idea (selling in England) to bundle the 520 with about 10 titles, mostly games, some home user applications. It is not an announced promotion. I don't know of plans to introduce it for the second quarter, although I think its a good idea.

Elizabeth Shook  
Atari Corporation

Editor Note;

The power pack concept was fully detailed in our special CES Report #402a wherein it was shown at the reception/hospitality suite. Surely, after the success it has shown in Europe, it wasn't a "testing of the waters" here in the States and has yet to be decided? If so, this is just another nail..... Wouldn't it be nice to know just who is the spokesperson for Atari and be able to rely upon the information forwarded by same?

- TORONTO, CANADA

\*\*\*\*\* TOS 1.4-1.6 GETS A BAD RAP! \*\*\*\*\*

-----

A READER WRITES; I am trying to get TOS 1.4 in Toronto, and so far, have been unsuccessful. Last week I phoned Atari Canada and was told that they were out of stock and had no idea when ("one week, one month, two months, we don't know") they would be getting new stock.

Today I phoned a local dealer (SaveTech) and was told that TOS 1.4 will no longer be available because it is being replaced by TOS 1.6 which is shipping inside the new STe (already selling in Canada). Is this true? I was also told that it would be a 2 chip set. I have a 1040ST (Rev.C) with the 6 chip TOS 1.0 and don't want to go to 2 chips if possible. Accurate info would be greatly appreciated. (I might end up ordering 1.4 mail order from the U.S.) Thanks.

-----

At this point, we must clarify, there is no basis in fact for the statement that TOS 1.4 is being replaced by TOS 1.6. There is however, a two chip and a six chip set containing TOS 1.4 presently available. The time frames for delivery is another question. Past performance concerning delivery timeliness should speak adequately for this matter.

- Chicago, IL.               \*\*\*\*\* ATARI DEALERS CONCERNED ONCE AGAIN       \*\*\*\*\*

-----

"There were FOUR versions of the STE marked on the box this one came in, with four different part numbers." "What the heck does Atari expect me to do order a number of each, when the deciding factor is the SIMMs installed in it.?" This was the strong message the dealer who called was trying to convey to Atari. Our humble opinion is that; Dealers will not order 2 or 4 meg STes, not when it makes sense economically to order one type of computer (the basic version) and add SIMMs as they are called for, in the field, by the customer. Besides, if dealers refuse to order the variety of pre-configured models, it would seem that Atari should be wise and prudent enough to allow the configuring of the memory to be a DEALER INSTALLED OPTION. ESPECIALLY since they recently enjoyed a \$10,000,000 write-off in the 3rd Quarter of '89 due to dropping DRAM prices. In any case, the smart money folks say make a single model. ie; a 1mb (dealer upgradable) mega style, 2 piece unit, STE and set all kinds of sales records.



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